

Blue Devils' 17-Hit Barrage Buries Newport Hawks 16-2

The Smyrna Blue Devils opened the local high school baseball season Friday afternoon by banging out 17 hits to score a 16-2 win over the Newport Hawks.

Smyrna ace Braxton Piner started on the mound for the Blue Devils and went the route, limiting the Hawks to a pair of hits, both singles. The crafty southpaw struck out 15 and walked six over seven innings.

The Blue Devils got to the Newport pitching early as they collected four hits and three runs in the bottom of the first inning and added two more runs on a pair of hits in the second frame.

They failed to score in the third inning as the side was retired in order but in the fourth the Blue Devils banged out three more hits, including a bases-empty home run blast by first baseman Grady Davis. Davis tied into a knee-high fast ball and sailed it over the left centerfield barrier.

Smyrna closed out its scoring in the final two frames by collecting three runs in the fifth inning and five in the sixth.

The Newport runs were scored in the fifth and seventh innings and each came without the aid of a hit. In the fifth, a base on balls sandwiched between a trio of Blue Devil errors, allowed a run to cross the plate and in the seventh another error let in a run.

Pacing the Blue Devils at the plate were shortstop Genus Jones and second baseman Norris Nelson. Jones rapped two singles, a double and a triple in five times at bat and Nelson lined three singles, in five trips. Blue Devil backstop, Curt Nelson, was credited with two hits in five trips to the plate and five runs batted in.

Totals:	
Newport	000 010 1-2
Smyrna	320 335 x-16



Viewing Sports

by
Larry McComb

Basketball, which ended in a flourish, is finished for another year and now high school baseball, although not one of the stronger county sports, gets an early jump on most diamond action.

With the elimination of the state baseball playoffs, a lot of smaller schools in North Carolina have dropped the spring sport from their activities. Among those is one team in this county, Atlantic. According to a report from Roy Cockerham at the Pirate school, Atlantic has given up baseball because of a lack of interest in the game plus the fact that it doesn't pay the school to make the long trips necessitated by their location.

But despite the fact that there will be no playoffs this year and that baseball interest is lagging, competition for the county championship could be the most heated in several years.

The defending county champs, the Smyrna Blue Devils, have another fine team and the Beaufort Seadogs will be bolstered tremendously by the addition of Parris Croom. Parris is a transfer student at Beaufort this year, having moved here from Wilmington where he was an outstanding hurler in Wilmington American Legion baseball last summer.

With Parris alternating pitching assignments with southpaw Pud Hassell, the Seadogs will have as good a pitching duo as any team in the state.

Whether or not Parris' strong right arm can carry the Seadogs to the county title remains to be seen. But the Blue Devils, with Braxton Piner, Curt Nelson and Co., around could have a lot to say about the situation.

For the past two seasons Piner has hurled the Blue Devils to county flags with very little opposition. His left-handed breaking pitches last year carried the Blue Devils as far as the second round of the state playoffs.

The Blue Devils will have basically the same team back this year with the exception of shortstop Dale Lewis who has dropped out of school. Curt Nelson will again handle all of the catching chores and should again be the top backstop around. Genus Jones, Grady Davis and Vaughn Yeomans are also being counted on heavily by Blue Devil coach Jim Parkin.

Morehead City and Newport high schools will also field teams this year and both schools should have players coming up from last year's Pony League program to strengthen their squads. Head football coach Norman Clark will handle the Eagles again this year and George Peacock will coach the Hawks.

The Eagles should have enough personnel depth to make a strong bid for the Coastal Plains conference championship. Players like James Nolan, Chutck Sledge and Bernard Leary, who all played Pony League ball last year, will lend experience to Clark's team.

That's 30 for now.